

yet she, as a cofounder of the Out of Iraq Caucus, and many of her colleagues voted in favor before the August recess of every one of these, let's see if we can tie General Petraeus' hands behind his back.

So, surely they don't want us to do poorly in Iraq. Surely not. I don't suggest that. But I just remind them that this Commander in Chief, I may not agree with him on every single thing. I think the issue of stem cell research is something I support him on. Some of my colleagues on this side of the aisle do not. His thoughts about a comprehensive immigration reform that includes what I think is amnesty, I don't support him on. Some of my colleagues on this side of the aisle do. But I can I think in the final analysis, this President, it may take 25 years, it may take 50 years, but I believe people will look back and say thank God that this man was in this place at this time after 9/11 and had the courage to stand up to finally say, you know, double-dog daring and triple-dog daring doesn't work.

Mr. DAVIS talked about the marine barracks and the USS Cole and the hostages in Iran for the 400 and something days, the 52 hostages. This President, this Commander in Chief had the courage to stand strong.

Now, my colleague just mentioned I had gotten back from Iraq, my fourth trip. I will probably never catch Mr. SHAYS. But each and every trip, honestly, I think I learn more and more. I want my colleagues to understand that. These trips, I hope the American people will listen. These trips are bipartisan. We go and, you know, we hear the facts. And the old saying, you are entitled to your own opinion, but you are not entitled to your own facts.

But I feel very strongly that General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker are going to come back and come to us as required by law, which we insisted on September 15, at least by that date, maybe a little bit before that date, and give us an accurate, fair, balanced report.

They are not going to try to paint this picture too bright. They are going to be accurate. I have said all along, we need to wait for that report before we all try to become 535 commanders in chief, many of us, including myself, who are not even veterans.

So I was very encouraged, I said to my colleague, Representative CARTER, on my trip, I think the troops are strong, absolutely. As Representative SHAYS said, they get weary, the families get weary. The American public is a little impatient. I understand that. War fatigue does set in. But this is not the time to give up. This is the time to be tough, stand strong and give victory a chance, because Mr. DAVIS said, if we don't, they win. The consequences of that are unfathomable.

As I conclude my remarks, I also want to say to a group of marines from my district, NAS Atlanta, deployed this morning, some of them for the third time. This is the "Red Dogs"

HMLA-773, a squadron of 255 marines. They are helicopter guys, Mr. Speaker, and they are light attack helicopters. They are going to be in a situation there at the al Assad Air Base. The President just made the trip over Labor Day weekend to meet with the troops. That's where they are going.

I saw them with their families, with their wives, with their little infant children. In one case, a little baby 2 weeks old was there in his mother's arms. There were cousins, there were aunts, there were uncles, and there were brothers and sisters and grandparents. It humbled me to stand among these heroes as I talked with them and told them how much, how deeply I think Members on both sides of the aisle appreciate their dedicated service to this country.

I wish them Godspeed and hope they will come back safe and sound to their loved ones.

But not one of them wavered, even though this may have been their second or third deployment. They are still strong, and that's the same thing that I saw when I went to Iraq on this recent trip.

God bless them. Let's hang in there for a little while longer. Then we are going to hear from General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker on September 15, and it will be an encouraging bit of news.

Mr. CARTER. I told everybody about that trip to Iraq. The man who led that trip to Iraq is here, Congressman MIKE BURGESS, one of my classmates, came into Congress with me. He is from the great State of Texas, the northern part of our State, from the Dallas-Ft. Worth-Denton area.

Congressman BURGESS was the leader of our group that went over for our long weekend. Congressman BURGESS may tell us about the trip and has pictures to look at.

Mr. BURGESS. Let me respectfully point out we call that the Dallas-Ft. Worth area back where I come from.

I am going to reiterate many of the points that have already been made tonight. It's hard to not cover ground that's already been covered.

This was my sixth trip to the country of Iraq. I was there a year ago. We went in July, toward the end of July, a weekend trip, as Mr. CARTER already pointed out. I didn't know it was possible to do a weekend trip to Baghdad but, indeed, it is if the circumstances are correct.

The year before I was there and heard about some of the things that were happening in a hospital, a little town called Ramadi. General Peter Chiarelli, as I recall, said, I am not sure what this means and probably too early to talk about it, but it seems as if we have been invited into the hospital, which was one of the main headquarters of the insurgents, the Sunni insurgents there in Ramadi, and the building was turned over without firing a shot.

A year later, the situation is completely reversed, and Ramadi was so

stable that not only could we talk about visiting it, we, indeed, did visit. It is that trip that really embodies the success that has occurred and, largely, the success that has occurred since beginning the additional troop strength in February and, of course, the ascension of General David Petraeus to be the commander of the forces in Iraq.

The fact is, I don't think you can deny that significant successes have been made and they continue to occur on an ongoing basis, returning control of the country to the Iraqi Government and to its people and delivering it out of the hands of criminals and murderers. But I don't think any of us would disagree. It's still a very dangerous situation and the sacrifice that's being made by all participants in the country is very, very real.

It is my opinion, and I spoke on the floor of this House right before we had the decision to support the President on the surge, it is my opinion that it is in America's broad interest that we be successful in this endeavor. It is also my opinion that it is, indeed, possible for us to be successful.

Nothing that I saw on this trip would discourage me from either one of those points. It is my opinion that a stable country in Iraq, with a representational government that's able to act as a partner in peace in the Middle East, would be vastly preferable to a lawless land ruled by terrorists, criminals, with sources and training capabilities where they would be able to expand their activities, not just to other areas of Iraq but, indeed, to other areas of the Middle East and, indeed, to other areas of the world.

Almost without question, the divergent future, the potential divergent future of that country was on the minds of almost everyone we encountered during that very brief 2-day trip. Certainly America's interest is going to be best served by stability in the country and their active participation in quieting a very troubled region.

In July of 2006, there was no way that we could have taken a congressional delegation into Ramadi. It would have been too dangerous, and we would have been turned down had we asked. But this time we got off of the C-130 in Baghdad and loaded onto the Black Hawk helicopters, and we were taken to Ramadi.

We met with the soldiers there. We met with the soldiers of the II Marine Expeditionary Force, which are part of the surge. General Gaston, who I believe is on the pictures with President Bush over the weekend, was part of that briefing that we had there, met the mayor, met the health minister.

The mayor of Ramadi sounded like a mayor in any one of the 60 cities that are in my district. He said, I need more Federal money. By the way, if you come back and visit next year, this place is really going to be something, so plan on coming back and spending some money when you get here. He sounded like a combination mayor and